

GETTING THERE FASTER

Challenge

The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) serving the counties of Lake, Porter and LaPorte with a combined population of 741,468. As the MPO, NIRPC is responsible for developing and regularly updating the federally prescribed 20-year, long-range regional transportation plan. These plans enable the region to receive federal transportation funding. NIRPC's *Connections 2030 Regional Transportation Plan* is the latest in a series developed over 30 years.

Action

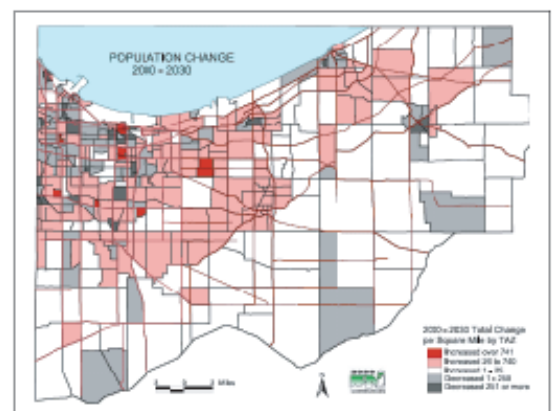
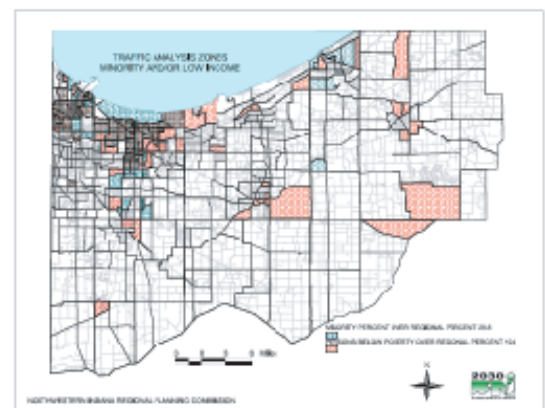
Developing the plan required pulling together huge amounts of data, some of which was not readily available. Planners needed detailed information to be shown at the "traffic analysis zone" level, but delays in the release of Census data meant some of that information had to be generated from scratch.

Using GIS and existing data, NIRPC was able to recreate the missing information, developing their own "base year" as a starting point for growth projections. GIS was then used to show changes in population, employment, and households at the traffic analysis zone level.

GIS was also used to identify special zones - concentrated elderly populations, vehicle availability, persons with disabilities, and areas of significant development - and incorporate them into the plan.

Results

- The use of GIS resulted in the development of a timely, accurate transportation plan
- GIS data developed for *Connections 2030* was shared with local jurisdictions and the GIS community in Northwest Indiana
- Planners were able to identify and concentrate on areas with particular needs
- GIS maps were used to easily communicate complex information during the adoption process and were incorporated throughout the completed *Connections 2030*



Maps showing traffic in minority and low income areas were used to develop the long-range transportation plan.